

REMARKS

This application was originally filed on 31 December 2001 with twenty one claims, four of which were written in independent form. Claims 1-3, 6, 11, and 16-19 were amended on 16 August 2004. Claims 1, 3, 16, and 17 have been amended, and Claims 2 and 23 canceled herein. Claims 18-21 have been allowed.

Claims 1 and 10-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Swanson. Claims 3, 5-9, 16, 17, and 24-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Swanson in view of Oda and Peek. Claims 1 and 10-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fliehmann in view of Oka and Swanson. Claims 3-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fliehmann in view of Oda, Swanson, Oda, and Peek. Claim 2, 4, 22, and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The applicant has amended Claims 1 and 16 to remove some of the limitations not required for patentability, to clarify the claims, and to add the limitations formerly found in Claim 2 to Claim 1, and the limitations formerly found in Claim 23 to Claim 16. The applicant respectfully submits Claim 1, and its dependent claims, should be deemed allowable for the reasons Claim 2 would have been deemed allowable and Claim 16, and its dependent claims, should be deemed allowable for the reasons Claim 23 would have been deemed allowable.

In view of the amendments and the remarks presented herewith, it is believed that the claims currently in the application accord with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are

allowable over the prior art of record. Therefore, it is urged that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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